

DISCUSSION.

Several students thought it would be a pity to destroy the children's joyful anticipation of an entirely new and unknown artist, and one averred that as in the field of nature the children's joy in gathering and naming flowers would be spoilt by directions to classify, so the field of art would lose some of its attractiveness by following a rigid chronology.

It was thought the chart might be of use for older children in placing the period of the artist chosen, etc. One student found that charts had a great attraction for some children in Classes IB and II, more even than for older children.

One student considered that reproducing pictures or their details increased reverence for the artist's work, and another found that, however feeble the attempts the children made, they appreciated the pictures all the more.

Miss Parish inquired whether it is the experience of teachers that children desire to know more details of the artists' lives as they grow older, and how lessons to older children are supplemented.

Several students reminded the meeting that Miss Mason attached great importance to the artist's life being subordinated to his work, and that interest in the picture was not necessarily the outcome of interest in the painter's life.

One student said that she considered it important that Class IV should be acquainted with the conditions of life at the time of painting in order to bring out the spirit of the age. She instanced the religious life that influenced the work of the Italian masters.

Another said that the spirit of the age was brought out in the subject, and the conditions of the life and history itself could be gleaned from the study of the picture, and another affirmed that more, indeed, could be learnt of the man and his times from the picture than from the study of the artist's

life, and cited Shakespeare as an example of a man being known through his works.

One student considered that there was a possibility of getting too literary an aspect of a picture, and another inquired if it would be lawful to point out the spirit of the picture to older children if it was not realized by them.

Miss Parish thought that if such was the case it plainly showed that the children were not yet ready for it, and that it is better to be content with just sowing seed, and that one may rest assured that anything *so living* is ultimately bound to bear fruit. She advised forcing nothing upon the children, but leaving them to take what they needed from the lessons.

The following resolution was put to the meeting, and carried:—"It is found most satisfactory to take picture-talks as at present set, to cover a wide field, with a possible addition of a chart in Classes II, III, and IV.

MEMORY TRAINING.

Memory consists of two parts: (a) the power of *registering* words and ideas in the brain, and (b) the power of *retaining* and *recalling* them.

(a) The first part, that of registering words and ideas, depends entirely upon *attention*. Thus we may be present at a lecture and hear every word, and yet retain nothing, simply because the *attention* has not been engaged. Here we find ourselves on familiar ground.

(b) But this is not all: we want to be able to retain and recall at any time that which we have learned.

The difficulty we have in recalling certain words, facts, or ideas varies, as we know, very much. For example, a child misspells two words in dictation exercise, such as "actually" and "potato." These words, perhaps, are

merely pointed out at the time. Next day, preparatory to visualizing and writing out, the child is asked to name those he wrote wrongly. Which of the two words will he recall first? I think there is no doubt that it will be "potato," which will come readily enough, while probably he will have to search for the other—perhaps to think of its position on the page, what came after or before it, what length of word it was, before he can recall it. What is the reason of this?

Situated in different parts of the brain are five sensory areas—those of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Closely allied to these are the centres of speaking and writing, which belong to the motor area. Now, "potato" is impressed on many centres, in fact, on all which I have just mentioned. The other word, "actually," would only be recorded in the speaking, hearing, writing, and seeing centres, which are, moreover, not nearly so retentive as the others, so that this word would not be remembered so readily. We may say, then, that the more centres, sensory and motor, employed, the better the memory will be. Therefore, we must try to make a chain of impressions in different brain centres, so linked together that the one recalls the other. For instance, in connection with this term's picture-talk, the child who has a toy on which is stamped "Made in Nuremberg," would have no difficulty in remembering Dürer's birth-place.

But the most difficult matter to remember is that which depends chiefly on the speech and hearing centres. A case in point—a pupil of mine, a boy of 7, was asked in an examination to tell what he knew of "the Father of the English Parliament." He narrated the whole story of Simon de Montfort, as given in *Island Story*, although he could not by any means recall the name of the man, and spoke throughout of the "Father of the Parliament." The words "Simon de Montfort" had been recorded only in

the auditory centre, and the other title suggested at once the familiar Houses of Parliament and the Thames, which latter reminded him that Simon once went for a picnic on this river. The rest of the story followed, each fresh idea being linked on to the last.

But we cannot always afford to retain simply ideas, which convey knowledge and let slip facts.

No, we have to train ourselves, and more particularly our pupils, to remember countless names, numbers, and figures quite apart from any idea associated with them. Therefore, in learning by heart, be it a poem, a mathematical formula, a Latin verb, or merely a list of names, we must really repeat it and visualize it much more than seems actually necessary at the time, in fact, till we have made it, as it were, part of our mental fabric. This being achieved, memory is no longer an effort of will or *volitional*, but automatic.

There are various systems by which we may learn by rote; but systems are dangerous things, and we always avoid them as much as possible. One of these, however, I would mention as being really useful as a time-saver, or when all other means fail. I mean the system of mnemonics.

Now, I do not dare to say how far we should adopt such a method with our pupils. I am inclined to think it encourages mental inertia. Automatic brain action is good, and often necessary, but volitional is better.

Still, we may sometimes save the brain much wear and tear by some simple aid to memory. Which of us, I would ask, could have gone successfully through a Swedish drill-table without "the huge sun-bonnet and the little jam coifs"? Or what child can tell you off-hand the number of days in any one month without recalling first the old rhyme—

"Thirty days hath September," etc?

Many children devise aids for remembering certain things. One of my pupils has a private system for remembering new French words. I don't inquire into it very closely, for it seems to me that as long as these props are self-originated they are not harmful. It is fatal for the teacher to step in and suggest a way of remembering some fact or figure, for in nine cases out of ten the pupil will remember only what was intended as a reminder without having any idea for what it stood, and so confusion will arise.

I think we are a little afraid in these days of overtaxing children's memory. In our own school days probably we learned whole pages of the histories and geographies by heart, and were none the worse for it. "And certainly none the better," perhaps you say. In the matter of history and geography this might be true, but as a matter of fact we were strengthening those tissues of the brain whose function it is to register and recall word-sounds—in other words, to memorize.

G. CLENDINNEN.

DISCUSSION.

It was suggested that so-called lack of memory was perhaps due to a want of sense of duty or moral training. Miss G. Clendinnen and others had found that insisting upon some one thing being remembered each day, and not for that day only, but to be recalled at a future time, did slowly but surely strengthen the memory. Another student suggested that observation walks, followed by a report, would be of use. At the end of the discussion the following resolution was passed:—"That when the want of memory is due to any cause other than want of attention, the child's memory should be trained by having a certain amount to remember each day, and by being questioned the next day or some days after."

ON TEACHING FRENCH.

I am not going to pretend that I think a foreigner can teach a foreign language as well as a native, unless he be an exceptionally good linguist, so as to enable the pupils to talk *fluently*; I lay stress on this word. It is almost a necessity to have a native to talk with your pupils once or twice a week—you notice I say talk with them. The technical part of the language can be taught equally well by a foreigner, provided he be a capable teacher.

I will not speak in this short paper of the well known and excellent methods advocated by Gouin, Berlitz, and Dent. They are all well-known methods, and excellent in the hands of a capable teacher—but I speak to the teacher who still wants something more—and who wants a change, perhaps.

Now, in addition to one or other of these methods, *plus* the reading of French books and the learning of grammar and French verbs, what can we teach?

Poetry.—First and foremost I say poetry, and *from the very beginning* I should suggest reading the piece through first to the children—and always choose the best you can—the children may not understand, but if you read well and have a pretty pronunciation it will be sure to please them. I should then translate the piece to them, and repeat it until the pupils are sure of the meaning of every phrase. This is a sufficient dissection—explain it no more, the piece may then be committed to memory and recited beautifully. It is well to learn what pleases, it inspires both teacher and pupil.

Plays.—Then there is the French play to be acted at the end of the term. What a joy it is, there are so many charming plays written for children, which Messrs. Hachette will send on approval for you to choose from. If they are *amusing* and *witty* all the better, it is an excellent

way of learning to apply French idioms and colloquial expressions, and then the language seems so *real* when you act it. In teaching privately it may often be difficult to obtain the *dramatis personæ*; well, then, the governess must take a part, and so must the mother and the friends living near! Insist all the time on as perfect an accent as possible—make your pupils repeat and repeat a phrase until the intonation is correct, do not allow any carelessness.

For quite elementary pupils, Miss Partington's little fables are admirable for acting—they are very simple to commit to memory. If there is not always time to act, read French plays to your pupils, translating *viva voce* as you proceed, and put all the life you can into the reading. This *free translation* as we proceed is often a great help in deriving a general idea of the language.

Fairy Tales.—For elementary classes, IA and IB, I should advise the reading of fairy tales, *i.e.*, that excellent little book *Little French Folk*; don't you find your little pupils love it? If they could *understand every word in that book*, they would know some French. We will suppose we are reading one of the little stories, "Jock et ses pipeaux." Read it first right through, with a great deal of expression and action—don't translate until afterwards, and then read it right through in English. They are very amused if you give a literal translation, and it helps them to recognize the words. I should then pick out the more familiar words, and write them on the blackboard; in each lesson the pupils may learn to recognize fresh words. Do not leave the story until *each* pupil says: "I understand it *all*."

Spelling.—I now come to the question of spelling, which is always rather a difficulty at first. Here some knowledge of phonetics will be useful; of course, the teacher *must* be able to pronounce well herself.

Can you pronounce clearly the following combination of

vowels and consonants:—O, AU, EAU, OU, EU, OI, AN, EN, ON (most important), IN, IEN, GNE, E, É, È, AI, AIL, ER, U, QUE, OUI, UI, etc. After all, these sounds are the *foundation* of French spelling. Let the pupils *write* and *say* these sounds from the age of six years old.

There will always be the difficulty of the last unsounded consonant; "liaison" will, of course, help in this matter, but it will always be rather a difficulty until the children know thoroughly well all their tense terminations.

Charlin's French Course.—Before closing my paper, I should like to mention a little French course which we use at our school; it enables the pupils to learn a great deal by themselves, and is an excellent preparation for public examination work for boys.

The book, which is divided into three parts, consists of sentences in English, to be translated into French, arranged on a systematic course, it confines matter to what is most essential, and regulates repetitions so as to combine the greatest possible result with the least effort of memory, it arranges matter so as to proceed from the *known* to the *unknown*, and it composes a grammar of colloquial French. Monsieur Charlin insists that "useful forms, learnt independently from their sense and in an invariable order, *never* occur to the mind when required in practical combination"; he therefore does not urge or advocate the use of French grammars written for *French* children.

In the method, the progress is made by the perfect command over what has already been learnt. As you may see, from these few notes, the object of this little method is rather utilitarian, but the results obtained from its use are really excellent.

A French version of the book is also obtainable, so that the pupil is enabled to work without the help of the teacher when necessary.

M. EVANS.

DISCUSSION.

The telling of stories in French was very much recommended, and that the children should take their part in the stories as in the game of "Family Coach." The children each have a word, or words, from the story, and on hearing their words, stand up. They should have some idea of the tale, and know the meaning of their own word, and by the end of the third reading they will have grasped the whole story.

It was said how important it is that the French governesses be trained, and that the "paltry" French governess was worse than useless. The French sisters in convents were recommended as excellent teachers.

The discussion led up to the phono-rhythmic method, as taught by Miss Krüger. Two or three students spoke most highly of the help in pronunciation they had derived from Miss Krüger's lessons. A short specimen lesson was given, which helped to point out the stress laid upon rhythm and voice inflection, especially the free use of the lips.

Resolution.—That the speaking of foreign languages be brought into everyday life, and so made more interesting to the child.

HOW TO HELP UNTRUTHFUL CHILDREN TO BECOME TRUTHFUL.

I cannot think now why I ever undertook to write this paper. The more I consider the subject, the greater are the difficulties which crop up before me. The instinct of a child is to tell the truth. If he lies it means that something is wrong; there is some distortion somewhere. Find out where, set it right, and there will be no more untruthfulness,

because it will be against instinct. But how to find out the defect, how to set it right, that is the difficulty.

There are, of course, different kinds of lies. Roughly, we may divide them into three classes:

Lies of fear (self-defence).

Lies of carelessness (inaccuracy).

Lies of malice.

This classification is quite incomplete, I know, but it seems to me to cover most of the untruthfulness that we are likely to meet with, and I cannot attempt to treat any more subtle kinds in this short paper.

Now, because all lying is symptomatic, our motto throughout our dealings with it must be *Remove the cause*. Sometimes this is very easily done. Much of our second class, lies of carelessness, hardly deserves the harsh name of lying. When a child comes to anyone with a much exaggerated story, he is careless of the truth, simply because he wishes to impress his listener, to show off, if you will. Such exaggerations from children we need not count as lies, we need not even worry to look for any deeply-hidden cause. A little good-natured patience and common sense is all that is needed, and the child will cure himself. This careless speech must not be treated as a sin, as too severe judgment is always discouraging for children. Deal with it rather as a somewhat babyish failing, joke about it, tell the time-honoured old story of the millions of cats turning out to be our cat and another, and if the children find that their exaggerations and inaccuracies neither amuse nor impress, they will soon get tired of them.

Lies of fear are more difficult to cope with. Everyone must have met the child who, when called upon to give some decisive answer, tells a lie in self-defence. This is the fault of a timid nature, and the timidity must be proved baseless and overcome before we can expect to achieve great things



in the way of a cure. And, though I think that this is a kind of untruthfulness that children grow out of, yet we must never underrate its harmfulness. Each lie, though it may in itself be unimportant, does something to undermine the child's integrity.

Timid children of this kind need very careful treatment. It is hopeless, when you have found them telling a lie, to be scornful, to show that you consider them beneath contempt, to visit your indignation upon them. What a nervous child, one who tells a lie out of fear, needs is encouragement to make him more daring, so that he will dare to tell the truth, even if the consequences are not altogether satisfactory to him. So encourage him, don't attempt to frighten him by acting the terrible judge. I think there is nothing that so discourages a nervous child from making efforts towards improvements as anger and harsh judgment. And, too, it is well to avoid facing children of this sort with what I call "money or your life" questions.

"But look at that dirty mark on your frock, I told you to put on your overall when you went out, did you or did you not?"

A child on the defensive will probably hesitate whether to answer "yes" or "no" to questions like this, and then say whichever suits him best. Don't test a weakling so hard as this. As long as we know that there is a tendency to tell lies, make truth-telling easy. Every time that a lie is avoided a step has been taken towards perfect truthfulness.

And now we come to the hardest part of the question—how to deal with malicious lies. If a child is not ashamed of telling lies, often most unnecessary ones, as is too often the case, what can anyone do to make him realize how wrong it is? It is a problem that has troubled many people.

It is in small things that we lay the foundations of truthfulness or untruthfulness. A liar is not made in a day, and

I dare say we should often be surprised and sorry if we could only know what a tiny thing has set a child on the path of malicious lying. We might also be surprised if we knew what an equally tiny thing had helped him to conquer this failing. But who dare estimate the importance or non-importance of life's details?

Always begin by trusting a child. Even when you have discovered him to be untruthful, be slow to believe in his guilt, then show how sorry you are, expect him to be ashamed and sorry too, and perhaps some little shadow of regret will assail him and make the next lie less easy.

Most important of all is the root-treatment of the matter. Every child, consciously or unconsciously, has an ideal which he strives to resemble. Help to make this ideal more clear, help to raise it so that it includes perfect truthfulness, and then all our devices to cure lying will not be in vain. Read interesting books to children, with a living and human hero, whom they can take as a pattern (honest Tom Brown is splendid for boys, I wish I could cite one as good for girls), discuss the books, praise and blame, appreciate and disapprove. Children often model themselves on the person they know that others admire.

There is one other help towards curing untruthfulness that I have not even mentioned here, the force of public opinion. We all know how it helps to keep the world straight, and no one is more influenced by it than children.

I have said nothing about punishment for untruthfulness, yet this is often an effectual way of stamping out the evil. All the same, what we usually understand as punishment is a very dangerous weapon to use. I think it generally does more harm than good, and hardens many hearts, but I do not feel competent to discuss this point.

A. P. WHITTALL.

DISCUSSION.

A student raised discussion on an untruthful child whom nothing seemed to cure. Apparently lies were vicious from laziness.

Another student said a child should not have a chance of telling a lie. Another suggested that the radical evil (laziness) in this case should be cured by making the child run errands. Perhaps her health was out of order, and that made her lazy.

THE ADVISABILITY OF A TRANSITION CLASS BETWEEN IB AND II.

There was no paper read on this subject. Class II has now been divided into two divisions, IIA and II. After some discussion the following resolution was carried: "That as any student may give her pupils part of the programmes of two classes, at her own discretion, no further transition class is needed."

WHAT SUBJECTS TO LEAVE OUT OF CLASS II WHEN TIME IS LIMITED.

Miss Kitching's introduction to the discussion of this subject involved the following points:

- (1) That the P.U.S. time-table is intended to serve simply as a guide to the teacher in making her own, for it stands to reason that no two schoolrooms are identical as regards the work done, or the time allotted it.
- (2) That in making her own time-table the teacher must be careful that no two lessons requiring the same mental effort, follow one another in close proximity.
- (3) That it is better to leave the term's work unfinished,

than to rush the pupils through for the sake of having finished the work set.

The general outcome of the discussion was to the effect that some modification of the programme and time-table is absolutely necessary, each teacher using her own discretion in the matter. Somebody very wisely remarked that Miss Mason intends the programme to fit the child, and not, as some wildly imagine, the child to fit the programme.

HOW PAST STUDENTS CAN KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE NEWEST FEATURES OF THE TRAINING AT SCALE HOW.

In opening this discussion the point I wish to maintain is that, in a general sense, there are no new features in the training at Scale How. If some features appear new, is it not because stress is laid at one time on a subject that has been weak, and at another time an opportunity arises of getting an expert to teach some other subject? On looking back over the nine or ten years that I know well, it is plain that this has often been the case, and that the subjects so cultivated have been on the P.U.S. programmes all the time.

For example, in 1901, my first year at Scale How, we enjoyed a delightful fortnight of drill and dancing under one of Mrs. Wordsworth's trained teachers, traditions of which still linger in the ball drill, practised by each generation of students. Since then Swedish drill has been in the ascendant, and it was taught by short visits from teachers trained at Bedford until a House of Education student was qualified to take the post of resident drill-mistress. Another instance of expert teaching occurred when Miss Stephens, with her London B.Sc. in mathematics and astronomy, was appointed to give nearly all her time to the teaching of